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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Né à Bolton, dans la nouvelle Angleterre le 17 Janvier 1706.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN *Founder*

*The Remarkable Record
of a Philadelphia Institution
from 1728 to 1915*



PHILADELPHIA
FRANKLIN PRINTING COMPANY

1915

Compiled by J. LINTON ENGLE

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DEDICATION

LIBRARY
SCHOOL

*Dedicated by the Franklin Printing Company
to the memory of its illustrious founder, who,
in the midst of a most varied and useful
life, found his chief joy and pride
in his accomplishments
and associations
as a printer*

1852305

CHRONOLOGY OF THE FRANKLIN PRINTING COMPANY

- 1728 Spring* Benjamin Franklin, now entering upon his twenty-second year, forms partnership with Hugh Meredith. Commences business "near the market" at 51 High Street, now (1915) 135 Market Street. Firm name B. Franklin and H. Meredith.
- 1730 July 14th* Partnership with Meredith dissolved.
- 1748 January* Franklin relinquishes active interest. David Hall for four years in Franklin's employ, is made active partner. Firm becomes Franklin and Hall, Hall agreeing to pay Franklin 1000£ for 18 years. (approximately \$2660 a year.)
- 1766 February 1st* Partnership with Hall dissolved and annual payment to Franklin ceases.
- 1766 May* David Hall forms partnership with William Sellers. Firm name is now Hall and Sellers.
- 1772 December 24th* David Hall dies. Firm continued as Hall and Sellers, the two sons of David Hall,—Wm. Hall and David Hall, Jr., taking the place of their father.
- 1804 February* Wm. Sellers dies at the age of 79. The business is now managed in the names of William and David Hall,—later transferred to Wm. Hall, Jr. (?)
- 1805 (about)* Wm. Hall, Jr. forms partnership with Geo. W. Pierie, as Hall and Pierie.
- 1815 or 1816* The firm of Hall and Pierie is dissolved. Hall and Pierie are succeeded by Hall and Atkinson (Samuel C. Atkinson.)

- 1821* Samuel C. Atkinson takes into partnership Charles Alexander. Firm is known as Atkinson and Alexander.
- 1828* Atkinson becomes sole proprietor.
- 1839* Atkinson sells to John S. DuSolle and Geo. R. Graham. DuSolle remains only a few months and is succeeded by Chas. J. Peterson, the firm being then Geo. R. Graham & Co.
- 1843* Geo. R. Graham and Chas. J. Peterson sell to Samuel D. Patterson & Co.
- 1848 March* Samuel D. Patterson & Co. sell to Edmund Deacon and Henry Peterson, each of whom had previously held an interest.
- 1873* Partnership dissolved. Edmund Deacon is now sole owner.
- 1877* Edmund Deacon dies. He is succeeded by his stepson, E. Stanley Hart. Business is henceforth conducted as Franklin Printing House, E. Stanley Hart, Proprietor.
- 1889 January* Incorporated as Franklin Printing Co., E. Stanley Hart, President; John Callahan, Treasurer and General Manager. Mr. Callahan had been associated with the business since February, 1852.
- 1891 August* E. Lawrence Fell and Wm. C. Sproul purchase a controlling interest in the business, the former being elected Treasurer, and the latter Vice-President and Secretary, E. Stanley Hart continued as President until March, 1893, when Mr. Hart retiring, E. Lawrence Fell was elected to that office, which position he still occupies. Robert N. Fell was elected Treasurer of the Franklin Printing Company in 1903, and William W. Fell, Secretary in 1910.

Location of Business

- 1728 At 51 High Street, now 135 Market Street.
- 1827 Moved to 112 Chestnut Street (old style numbering), between Third and Fourth Streets.
- 1833 Moved to 36 Carters Alley (the northern end of Dr. Jayne Building, now occupies the site).
- 1840 Moved to the second floor of the old Ledger Building, at the southwest corner of Third and Chestnut Streets.
- 1848 Moved to No. 66 (old style numbering), South Third Street, over the North American Office, in building adjoining Girard Bank on the south side. From here they removed to 321 Chestnut Street.
- 1889 Moved to 514-520 Ludlow Street, in building now known as the Fell Building, and owned by the Franklin Printing Company.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Founder

CHAPTER I

The Day of Beginnings

ON a certain day in the Spring of 1728,—a day that was to mark an epoch in the history of printing in the American Colonies—there was unusual activity at 51 High Street, Philadelphia. The types and the press ordered several months previous from a London house by Benjamin Franklin and Hugh Meredith had arrived and were being duly installed in their new home.

Franklin, then 22 years old, and already a master printer, was about to launch himself upon that career which was destined to land him, when only forty-two, at the port of affluence and to bring him, in his riper years, to greater and greater distinction.

Philadelphia at this time was a town of perhaps 12,000 inhabitants. It was a population energetic, thrifty, yet nevertheless giving but indifferent support to the two printers who had the temerity to engage in their chosen vocation. Printing in those days was not classed as a profit-making industry, and the road to better conditions was yet to be plotted out by Franklin himself.

Nevertheless, nowhere in America, outside of Boston, had printing reached so honorable and influential a position as it then occupied in Philadelphia. Doubtless it was owing to the broad and tolerant policy of William Penn that in a relative measure at least the printing press had flourished in Philadelphia from the earliest times. As late as 1733 the Governor of New York felt obliged, for some offence real or imagined, to stop the press then running in that city. In 1718 the Governor of Virginia, when advertising a reward for pirates, was compelled to send to Philadelphia to have

the handbills struck off. And yet on another occasion he "Thanked God that they had no press." In 1686 Governor Randolph of Massachusetts had forbidden anyone to print without his consent. Four years before that time the General Court of Massachusetts had determined that there should be no press used except one at Cambridge, and that only under the supervision of two licensees. These restrictions were deemed necessary to prevent abuse of the constituted authorities.

Penn's colony, however, escaped such espionage, and consequently there had been nothing to deter the first Pennsylvania printer, Wm. Bradford, from setting up his press in Philadelphia immediately upon the founding of the colony.

Franklin, in his autobiography, says it was freely predicted that the firm of Franklin & Meredith must fail, as there were already too many printers in the city. Yet there were but two—the one Andrew Bradford, son of William Bradford, and the other Samuel Keimer.

Neither of these two men had the grasp and knowledge of his business then enjoyed by Franklin, a mere boy just out of his teens. Keimer was slovenly in his person and in his business, suspicious in his dealing and, as Franklin says, something of a knave withal. He was eventually forced, through the pressure of his creditors, to sell his business, when he quit Philadelphia for the Barbadoes. He was an odd character and over-reaching, and, as will be shown later on in the story of the founding of the Pennsylvania Gazette, entirely unable to utilize to advantage his own ideas. Andrew Bradford appears to have been a man of fairly generous qualities, though narrow in some respects, as Franklin discovered, when as postmaster, Bradford refused to carry any newspaper but his own, the American Weekly Mercury. He seems to have succeeded, however, better than might have been expected, and in the eyes of the young Franklin became moderately wealthy, for the latter says of him after Keimer and Keimer's suc-

cessor had departed: "There remained now no competitor with me at Philadelphia but the old one, Bradford: who was rich and easy, did a little printing now and then by straggling hands, but was not very anxious about the business."

Franklin had arrived in Philadelphia one Sunday morning in October in the year 1723. He was a lad then of only sixteen years. His brother James, a printer in Boston, had proved a hard taskmaster, and an opportunity presenting itself, Benjamin broke the indentures which bound him to his brother and fearlessly started to carve out his career elsewhere. Reaching New York he found that the only printer in that town, William Bradford, formerly of Philadelphia, needed no help. Bradford, however, recommended that he journey on to Philadelphia and apply at the shop of his son Andrew Bradford who had just lost by death an apprentice named Aquila Rose.

The journey from New York proved to be perilous and difficult. Franklin traveled by boat in a fierce storm to Amboy, thence afoot to Burlington and from there again by boat to Philadelphia. His "whole stock of cash", he says, "consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper." The first Sunday he spent very quietly, recuperating from his rough and discouraging journey. He slept in the morning, as he says, while he sat with the Friends in "the great meeting house near the market," and then again continued his rest in the afternoon and until the following morning at the Crooked Billet Tavern in Water Street.

Monday morning he applied to Andrew Bradford for work, only to find that the position he had hoped to obtain had already been filled. However, William Bradford, who had preceded Franklin from New York on horseback, volunteered to introduce him to Samuel Keimer, the other printer of the town, whose place of business was near by.

The two found Keimer composing an elegy to the memory of Aquila Rose, the late lamented apprentice of

Bradford, using the only font of type in the plant. There was no other job under way. Franklin therefore left Keimer with the understanding that as soon as the elegy should be in type he would return and run it off press. For several days, Franklin was kindly permitted by Andrew Bradford to lodge and eat with him, doing occasional odd jobs in return.

A steady position was offered by Keimer on completion of the elegy. As Franklin says: "Keimer sent for me to print off the elegy. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work." Keimer, objecting to Franklin lodging with his competitor, Bradford, secured comfortable accommodations for Franklin with a Mr. Read. Then began the romance which was eventually to join the daughter of the house, Deborah Read, in matrimony with Franklin.

Franklin's work for Keimer was highly satisfactory. His genial disposition, his marked ability, and easy adaptability to people and circumstances soon brought him to the notice of persons of prominence. Among these was the Governor of Pennsylvania, Sir William Keith, who discovering the unusual skill and versatility of the young printer, strongly urged him to set up for himself. Moved by the flattery of Keith, who later proved to be absolutely irresponsible and a hollow adviser, Franklin decided in April of 1724 to return to Boston and, with a favorable letter from Keith, to endeavor to secure from the elder Franklin the financial help necessary to equip in Philadelphia a small printing plant. But when he reached Boston, Josiah Franklin saw things in a different light. He appreciated the pleasant things said of his boy by Governor Keith, but all the while his judgment of Keith was at low ebb. As Franklin says, his father declared that Keith "must be of small discretion to think of setting a boy up in business who wanted yet three years of being at man's estate." The necessary help was refused. But the father gave generously some wholesome advice, "telling

me," as Franklin says, "that by steady industry and a prudent parsimony I might save enough by the time I was one-and-twenty to set me up; and that if I came near the matter he would help me out with the rest."

Returning to Philadelphia, after an absence of only a few weeks, he continued in the employ of Samuel Keimer until the latter part of the same year, when he set sail in the ship *Annis* for London.

CHAPTER II

Franklin in London

FRANKLIN had embarked on this voyage at the urgent solicitation of Keith who had told him, on his return from visiting his father in Boston, "Since he will not set you up I will do it myself." Says Franklin, "I presented him with an inventory of a little printing house, amounting, by my computation, to about 100 pounds sterling. He liked it but asked me if my being on the spot in England to choose the type, and see that everything was good of the kind, might not be of some advantage." Thus it was that the trip had been settled upon. Governor Keith was supposed to have delivered to the vessel on the day that Franklin sailed, letters of credit, which would have enabled him to make the necessary purchases when reaching London. The mail bag was opened as the vessel sailed into the English Channel, but what was Franklin's consternation to find that it contained nothing from the governor for him. Keith thus demonstrated his utter worthlessness as a financial support to the young printer, and Franklin was set down in London stranded, though far from helpless.

The vessel landed December 24th, 1724. In conformity with his usual practice Franklin had made some lasting and valuable friendships during the voyage across. One of his fellow voyagers, Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, advised him to apply himself to his trade for a time in London. "Among the printers here," said he, "you will improve yourself, and when you return to America you will set up to greater advantage." As to Keith, Denham told his young friend "that no one who knew him, had the smallest dependence on him, and he laughed at the notion of the governor's giving me a letter of credit, having as he said no credit to give."

Franklin continues, "I immediately got into work at Palmer's, then a famous printing house in Bartholomew Close, and here I continued near a year." He

says, "I was pretty diligent, but spent with Ralph (a friend who accompanied him to England), a good deal of my earnings in going to plays and other places of amusement." His record at his trade throughout his stay in London evidently was a good one. Toward the end of a year at Palmer's he says "I now began to think of getting a little money beforehand, and expecting better work, I left Palmer's to work at Watts's near Lincoln's Inn Fields, a still greater printing house. Here I continued all the rest of my stay in London."

On the 23rd of July 1726 he sailed from Gravesend, in the company of his friend, Mr. Denham, who had engaged him as clerk in a mercantile enterprise which he was about to enter upon in Philadelphia. Franklin's prospects as a merchant were very brilliant, and had Mr. Denham lived, the printing craft would undoubtedly have missed one of its most brilliant lights. But it was decreed otherwise. After a long illness, beginning February, 1727, the merchant died. The business was taken over by the executors, and Franklin's employment thereby ended.

It was then that, as he says, "Keimer tempted me, with an offer of large wages by the year, to come and take the management of his printing house, that he might better attend his stationer's shop." Unable to get employment as a merchant's clerk Franklin reluctantly accepted Keimer's offer and once more engaged in his trade as printer.

Keimer's real motive in employing Franklin was to use him in the training of his other employees, intending, when this should be accomplished, to discharge him. Keimer himself was a wretched workman and without either the knowledge or the ability to build up an efficient working organization. He knew that Franklin could do this. Franklin's life with Keimer at this period was an active one. Keimer being something of a Seventh Day Adventist, all their work was crowded into five days, both Saturday and Sunday being holidays.

Of his work and the plant, Franklin says: "Our printing house often wanted sorts, and there was no letter founder* in America; I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to the manner; however, I now contrived a mould, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supplied in a pretty tolerable way all deficiencies. I also engraved several things on occasion; I made the ink; I was warehouseman, and everything, and, in short, quite a factotum."

But so rapidly did Franklin improve the condition of the plant and develop the skill of the employees that when Keimer paid his second quarter's wage he let him know that he considered it too heavy. He grew increasingly uncivil to his foreman, sought opportunities to reprimand him, and at last losing his temper, discharged him. Franklin made no demur, although he might have urged the fulfilment of his contract.

In the evening of the same day that he left Keimer, this time as he thought for good, he was visited by his friend, Hugh Meredith. Meredith was one of the hands whom Franklin had found in Keimer's employ and whom he had instructed, in the craft. He is described in the Autobiography as "A Welsh Pennsylvanian, thirty years of age, bred to country work; honest, sensible, had a great deal of solid observation, was something of a reader, but given to drink."

Long into the night they talked, discussing ways and means and laying plans for a business of their own. Franklin says of this occasion, speaking of Meredith, "He had conceived a great regard for me, and was very unwilling that I should leave the house while he remained in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native country, which I began to think of; he reminded me that Keimer was in debt for all he possessed; that his creditors began to be uneasy; that he kept his shop miserably, sold often without profit for ready money,

*The best type came from the celebrated foundry of Wm. Caslon in London. Caslon lived from 1692 to 1766.

and often trusted without keeping accounts; that he must therefore fail which would make a vacancy I might profit of. *I objected on account of my want of money.* He then let me know that his father had a high opinion of me, and from some discourse that had passed between them, he was sure would advance money to set us up, if I would enter into partnership with him. 'My time,' says he, 'will be out with Keimer in the Spring; by that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible, I am no workman; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally.'"

Meredith's father being in Philadelphia at the time, the plan was promptly laid before him, and met with approval and support. Franklin prepared an inventory of what would be required for the new plant and the list was handed a merchant who ordered the stock from England. "The secret was to be kept," says Franklin, "till the things should arrive and in the meantime I was to get work if I could at the other printing house." But as there proved to be no vacancy at Bradford's, for several days Franklin enjoyed an enforced idleness.

About this time Keimer foresaw a possible order to print some paper money for New Jersey and this would require certain engravings and types which only Franklin could supply. Fearing that his competitor, Bradford, might steal the march on him and engage Franklin for the same purpose, he craftily sent for his late foreman, apologized and re-engaged him.

The New Jersey job was obtained. In order to execute it Franklin contrived to make a copper plate press, "The first that had been seen in the Country." To complete this issue of money it required the presence of Franklin and Keimer in Burlington for nearly three months.

Shortly after returning to Philadelphia the material for the new printing plant arrived from London. Franklin continues "We settled with Keimer and left

him before he heard of it. We found a house to hire near the Market and took it." Thus it was that in the Spring of 1728 Benjamin Franklin and Hugh Meredith commenced business at 51 High St. The sign which they put over the door appears to have read *Franklin & Meredith* to which they added, "*The New Printing Office.*" In his history of Printing in America, Isaiah Thomas, who knew Franklin in his later years, says that this sign, "The Newest Printing Office," remained on the board over the door, until 1814 and that it was placed there by Franklin himself.*

The rent for the building was twenty-four pounds a year. To reduce their burden, they took in Thomas Godfrey, a glazier, and his family, "who were to pay a considerable part of it to us; and we to board with them."

*As the imprint on the Gazette from the first number published by Franklin reads "The New Printing Office," and not "newest," Thomas is probably in error as to the wording, to that extent only.

CHAPTER III

The First Customer

“WE had scarce opened our letters,” says Franklin, “and put our press in order, before George House, an acquaintance of mine, brought a countryman to us, whom he had met in the street inquiring for a printer. All our cash was now expended in the variety of particulars we had been obliged to procure, and this countryman’s *five shillings*, being our first fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown I have since earned; and the gratitude I felt toward House has made me often more ready than perhaps I should otherwise have been to assist young beginners.”

There was much hard work in store for the new firm, many long days, and nights. Yet from the first, Franklin’s methods assured success. On one occasion, when at the merchant’s Every-night club one of the members predicted failure for Franklin & Meredith, because there were already two printers before them in Philadelphia, a Dr. Baird dissented most vigorously, “for,” said he, “the industry of that Franklin is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind; I see him still at work when I go home from club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed.”

In the autumn of the preceding year Franklin had formed his acquaintances into a club for mutual improvement, which was named the Junto. This club contained some young and middle aged men of note, several of whom proved to be true friends of the young master printer. And here let it be noted that Franklin seemed to possess the happy faculty of turning to advantage, sometimes consciously, but often unconsciously, almost every act of his life. His friendships were real friendships, and they generally lasted through life. He was always ready to lend a hand and he accordingly seldom had to seek help himself. It was offered him without the asking.

Of the members of the Junto who assisted Franklin particular mention is due Joseph Breintnal. Of him Franklin speaks with rare kindliness. Through Breintnal was secured the first large order. This was "from the Quakers for the printing forty sheets of their history, the rest being done by Keimer; and upon this we worked exceedingly hard, for the price was low. It was a folio, propatria size, in pica, with long primer notes. I composed of it a sheet a day, and Meredith worked it off at press; it was often eleven at night, and sometimes later, before I had finished my distribution for the next day's work, for the little jobs sent in by our other friends now and then put us back. But so determined I was to continue doing a sheet a day of the folio that one night, when having imposed my forms, I thought my day's work over, one of them by accident was broken, and two pages reduced to pi. I immediately distributed and composed it over again before I went to bed; and this industry visible to our neighbors, began to give us character and credit."

"The New Printing Office," had been opened but a short time when George Webb, one of Keimer's employees, a bond servant late of Oxford University, but of discreditable habits, who had just been enabled to buy his time from his master, came to Franklin offering himself as a journeyman. Says Franklin, "We could not then employ him; but I foolishly let him know as a secret that I soon intended to begin a newspaper, and might then have work for him. My hopes of success as I told him were founded on this, that the then only newspaper, printed by Bradford, was a paltry thing, wretchedly managed, no way entertaining, and yet was profitable to him. I therefore thought a good paper would scarcely fail of good encouragement. I requested Webb not to mention it; but he told it to Keimer, who immediately, to be beforehand with me, published proposals for printing one himself, on which Webb was to be employed."

The paper published by Bradford to which Franklin refers was the American Weekly Mercury, the first number of which appeared Dec. 22, 1719. It was the third paper to appear in the Colonies, being antedated in birth by the Boston Gazette by one day only.

The history of the Pennsylvania Gazette is so closely interwoven over so long a period of years with the printing business founded by Franklin, that a brief account of its establishment and character will be in order here.

Nervous with anxiety to forestall Franklin, Keimer on the first of October, 1728, issued an announcement in the form of a two page sheet, $7\frac{3}{8}$ x $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches in size, informing the public that he would shortly publish the first number of a paper to be called "The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette." What news he could easily get he would insert but the really ambitious feature of his project was to reprint serially the entire edition of Chambers' Encyclopædia. In his announcement he says: "As this News Paper in a few weeks time after its first Publication, will exceed all others that ever were in America, and being always a whole sheet, it will contain at times, the Theory of all Arts, both liberal and mechanical, and the several sciences both humane and divine; with the Figures, Kinds, Properties, Production, Preparations of Things natural and Artificial; also the Rise, Progress and State of things, Ecclesiastical, Civil, Military, and Commercial, with the several Systems, Sects, Opinions among Philosophers, Divines, Mathematicians, Antiquarians, etc., after an Alphabetical order, the whole being the most complete body of History and Philosophy ever yet published since the Creation; containing among many thousand other things, such as the following:

The first number of the Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences was published Dec. 24th, 1728. In this Keimer naively says: "We have little news of consequence at present, the English Prints being generally

stufft with robberies, cheats, fires, murders, bankruptcies, promotions of some, and hanging of others; nor can we expect much better until vessels arrive in the Spring, when we hope to inform our readers what has been doing in the Court and Cabinet, in the Parliament House as well as in the Sessions as Dr. Wild wittily expressed it of the European, viz:

We are all seized with the Athenian Itch,
News and New Things do the Whole World bewitch.

In the meantime we hope our readers will be content for the present with what we can give 'em, which if it does 'em no good, shall do 'em no hurt. 'Tis the best we have, and so take it."

Such drivell alone it would seem would have been sufficient to kill the enterprise. Add to this the fact that Franklin, incensed at Keimer's piracy of his idea, turned a very clever trick by editing a live and really interesting department in Bradford's "Mercury." "By this means the attention of the Publick was fixed on that paper, and Keimer's proposals, which were burlesqued and ridiculed, were disregarded." "He began his paper, however," says Franklin, "and after carrying it on three quarters of a year, with at most only ninety subscribers, he offered it to me for a trifle; and I, having been ready for some time to go on with it, took it in hand directly; and it proved in a few years extremely profitable to me."

The quaint language used by Keimer in announcing the failure of his project is worth recording. He says, in the thirty-ninth number on the twenty-fifth of September, 1729, "It not quadrating with the circumstances of the printer hereof, S. K., to publish this Gazette any longer, he gives notice that this paper concludes his third quarter; and is the last that will be printed by him. Yet that his generous subscribers may not be balked or disappointed, he had agreed with B. Franklin and H. Meredith, at the new printing office to continue it to the end of the year, and probably if further encouragement appears it will be continued

longer. The said S. K. designs to leave this province early in the Spring or sooner, if possible he can justly accommodate his affairs with everyone he stands indebted."

The next number of the paper, the fortieth, appeared on the second of October, 1729, with a new dress of type, and with the abbreviated title: *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Chambers' Encyclopædia went into the discard and its place was taken with real news of the day and the delightful and entertaining discourses and letters, etc., of Franklin himself.

As published by Franklin the *Gazette* is a well printed sheet, being set in large clear type, and showing throughout the touch of a master hand. Bound volumes in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society are in an excellent state of preservation, showing that the paper used was of an enduring character. The early volumes are four pages in size, the pages measuring $7\frac{3}{8}$ x $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The imprint at the bottom of the fourth page reads: "Philadelphia: Printed by B. Franklin and H. Meredith at the New Printing Office near the Market, where advertisements are taken in and all persons may be supplied, with this paper at Ten Shillings a year."

Early numbers of the *Gazette* printed by Franklin contained such advertisements as the following:

French is taught at Mr. Cunningham's, a Barber, next door to Mrs. Rogers in Market Street, by Daniel Duborn.

A likely negro woman to be sold: She can wash and iron very well, and do house-work.

Nor does the printer neglect to advertise his own wares:

Good writing parchment sold by the printer hereof, very reasonable.

Likewise:

Good Live Geese Feathers, sold at the Printers' hereof.

Let it be noted in passing that Samuel Keimer shortly after selling the *Gazette* carried out his purpose to desert Philadelphia for the Barbadoes. His devious ways had brought him low. As he himself described his plight he had had the misfortune, "to be three times

ruined as a master printer, to be nine times in prison, and often reduced to the most wretched circumstances," besides being "hunted as a partridge on the mountains."

The Pennsylvania Gazette proved an invaluable acquisition to the "New Printing Office," and its editor and chief publisher saw to it that its usefulness did not slacken.

Speaking of the early numbers Franklin says, "some spirited remarks of my writing, on the dispute then going on between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal people, occasioned the paper and the manager of it to be much talked of, and in a few weeks brought them all to be our subscribers.

"Their example was followed by many, and our number went on growing continually. This was one of the first good effects of my having learnt a little to scribble; another was, that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient to oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the votes and laws, and other publick business. He had printed an address of the House to the Governor, in a coarse blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference; it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printer for the year ensuing.

"But a serious difficulty now began to threaten. Meredith's father who had agreed to finance the new company, found himself, after paying one hundred pounds currency, unable to advance the balance, a matter of another hundred pounds. So the merchant through whom the equipment for the plant had been purchased, becoming impatient brought suit and sued us all. We gave bail, but saw that, if the money could not be raised in time the suit must soon come to a judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects

must, with us, be ruined, as the press and letters must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price."

Furthermore his partner Meredith was doing badly, having gone back to those old habits from which Franklin had once rescued him. He was becoming known as a town character of ill repute and seldom sober. He had failed to improve his skill as a workman, remaining a poor penman besides being no compositor. Most of the work and the entire management of their business rested upon Franklin, who nevertheless out of gratitude to the Merediths had continued to bear the double burden cheerfully.

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CHAPTER IV

Friends in Need

WITH the impending financial crisis hovering over Franklin we are to find once more his good genius caring for him.

Of this time he says: "In this distress two true friends, whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever shall forget while I can remember anything, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and without any application from me, offering each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit. These two friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace (both were members of the Junto). I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remained of the Merediths fulfilling their part of our agreement, because I thought myself under great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do if they could; but, if they finally failed in their performance, and our partnership must be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends.

"Thus the matter rested for some time, when I said to my partner, 'Perhaps your father is dissatisfied at the part you have undertaken in this affair of ours, and is unwilling to advance for you and me what he would for you alone. If that is the case tell me, and I will resign the whole to you, and go about my business.' 'No,' said he, 'my father has really been disappointed, and is really unable, and I am unwilling to distress him farther. I see this is a business I am not fit for. I was bred a farmer, and it was a folly in me to come to town, and put myself at thirty years of age, an apprentice to learn a new trade. Many of our Welsh people are going to settle in North Carolina, where land is cheap. I

am inclined to go with them, and follow my old employment. You may find friends to assist you. If you will take the debts of the Company upon you; return to my father the hundred pounds he has advanced, pay my little personal debts, and give me thirty pounds and a new saddle, I will relinquish the partnership, and leave the whole in your hands.' I agreed to this proposal; it was drawn up in writing, signed, and sealed immediately. I gave him what he demanded, and he went soon after to Carolina, from whence he sent me next year two long letters, containing the best account that had been given of that Country, the climate, the soil, husbandry, etc., for in those matters he was very judicious. I printed them in the papers and they gave great satisfaction to the publick.

"As soon as he was gone, I recurred to my two friends, and because I would not give an unkind preference to either, I took half of what each had offered and I wanted, of one, and half of the other; paid off the company's debts, and went on with the business in my own name, advertising that the partnership was dissolved."

The date of dissolution of this partnership between Franklin and Meredith was July 14th, 1730.

From this time forward Franklin appears to have prospered. His business grew, his friends increased in number and the *Gazette* became more and more a power in the Province; indeed in time it came to have the largest circulation of any paper in all the Colonies. Some difficulty Franklin did experience in getting the *Gazette* distributed outside of Philadelphia. The reason for this was that Andrew Bradford of "The Sign of the Bible," a publisher of the "Mercury" the rival sheet, was also post-master and used his power to create a monopoly. His riders were strictly forbidden to carry the *Gazette* when delivering the mails. Some few however Franklin did manage to get through surreptitiously. Of Bradford's narrow policy in this instance Franklin complained as follows: "I thought so meanly of him

for it, that, when I afterward came into his situation as Post-master I took care never to imitate it."

It should be noted that an attempt was made by Franklin to publish the *Gazette* twice a week. In fact a few numbers were issued semiweekly, but deliveries were bad, and the plan generally proving impractical, it was discontinued. The *Gazette* was the first newspaper in America to be published twice in the same week.

For his time the products of Franklin's press were remarkably varied. Not a single avenue for new business escaped him. His genial temperament, his facile pen, his keen business sense, his foresight and interest in public men and affairs, his love of books of science, of wit and of everything worth while in the life of his day, was turned to account to the building of such a business of which anyone might well be proud. Branching out into the realms of finance in the early days of his business he wrote an anonymous pamphlet which he called "The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency." This he prepared, because as he says at that time there were only 15,000 pounds in paper money in Pennsylvania. This pamphlet "was well received by the common people in general and the point was carried by a majority in the House. My friends there, who conceived I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me by employing me in printing the money; a very profitable job and a great help to me. This was another advantage gained by my being able to write."

This job gave him some fame for he says, "I soon after obtained through my friend Hamilton, the printing of the Newcastle paper money, another profitable job as I then thought it; small things appearing great to those in small circumstances; and these to me were really great advantages, as they were great encouragements. He procured for me, also, the printing of the laws and votes of that government, which continued in my hands as long as I follow'd the business." The public printing of New Jersey also came to him in similar manner.

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CHAPTER V

A Period of Expansion

IT was about this time that Franklin added to his printing business a stationer's shop, in which he kept "blanks of all sorts, the correctest that ever appear'd among us, being assisted in that by my friend Breintnal. I had also paper, parchment, books, etc." His keenness to give the "publick" just what they wanted in his stationery shop is shown well combined with his sense of humor in the following as recorded in Isaiah Thomas's "History of Printing*."

Bills of lading formerly began with, "shipped by the Grace of God," etc. Some people of Philadelphia objected to this phraseology as making light of serious things. Franklin therefore printed some without these words and inserted in his paper the following advertisement: "Bills of lading for sale at this office, with or without the Grace of God."

Even with the stationery department his place of business at the beginning was not crowded, for one side of the shop he says was used by Godfrey for his glazier's business. This was Godfrey who with his family had been taken in to occupy the house and with whom Franklin boarded. This arrangement lasted for some time but was at last broken, through the inability of Franklin and Mrs. Godfrey, who had constituted herself a matchmaker, to agree on certain terms of settlement which Franklin proposed as his ultimatum for the marriage which Mrs. Godfrey had hoped to see consummated with the daughter of one of her relatives. Franklin's attitude being resented, the Godfreys removed, leaving him the whole house. But this incident turned his thoughts more seriously to marriage, with

*Isaiah Thomas, from whose History of Printing some of the facts in this book are drawn, was another self-made printer. He was born in 1749 and died in 1831. With only six weeks' schooling, he made himself a notable figure in printing and publishing circles of his time, and in the literary life of the nation. Most of his life work was laid in Worcester, Mass. His "History of Printing," published in 1810, has always been recognized for its general accuracy by historians.

the result that on the first of September, 1730, he married his old flame, Deborah Read. "She proved a good and faithful helpmate, assisted me much attending shop; we strove together, and have ever mutually endeavor'd to make each other happy."

Previous to his marriage he had begun gradually to pay off the debt he "was under for the printing house." "In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in reality industrious and frugal, but to avoid all appearances to the contrary. I drest plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out a fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, snug, and gave no scandal; and to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home a paper I purchas'd at the stores thro' the streets on a wheelbarrow. Thus being esteem'd an industrious thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on swimmingly."

Keimer in the meanwhile had gone to Barbadoes and had been succeeded in Philadelphia by his apprentice David Harry: of the latter Franklin says "I was at first apprehensive of a powerful rival—as his friends were very able, and had a good deal of interest. I therefore propos'd a partnership to him, which he, fortunately for me, rejected with scorn." Harry's pride, expensive habits, and neglect of business were his undoing, and Franklin is soon able to announce "There remained now no competitor with me at Philadelphia but the old one Bradford."

CHAPTER VI

"Poor Richard"

UNDOUBTEDLY the most important and influential product of Franklin's press was his "Poor Richard Almanack." In those days there were no magazines, and in all the American Colonies only three newspapers. A newspaper, too, was regarded as a luxury, even though it came but once a week, and comparatively few of the colonists were subscribers. Yet even in the remote hamlets, and on the farms farthest back in the country an almanac could be found hanging by almost every fireside throughout the year. There were several of these Almanacs before Franklin's day, serving their purpose as guides to the days of the week and month, showing the eclipses, the new moon, the full moon, etc., and predicting unblushingly all kinds of weather, but more than all else giving their readers mental nourishment and entertainment in short articles and extracts, some original, and others culled from here and there. In many households there was virtually no other reading matter.

Realizing the profit that lay in this field and probably knowing he could outdo the other almanac makers of his period Franklin prepared and issued the first number of his "Almanack" in 1732. This he made to appear as having been written and compiled by a Richard Saunders, but "printed and sold by B. Franklin, at the New Printing Office near the Market."

The "Poor Richard Almanack" marked the high tide in almanac making. It marked also an epoch in American literature; it was the first bit of real literary humor of any consequence to be published this side of the Atlantic. It was continued by Franklin for twenty-five years. He says "I endeavor'd to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand that I reap'd considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand." A glimpse at the pages reproduced in this book will give one, even at

this late day an early understanding of the popularity enjoyed by "Poor Richard."

In the meantime Franklin's business grew apace. With the advancing years his prosperity became more and more marked. Before he was forty his was the leading printing plant in the Colonies. He was more widely patronized than any other printer in America. Almost all the important printing in the middle Colonies came to him, and indeed he had a large share of that in the Southern Colonies also.

In the year 1744 there came to Philadelphia from London, a young printer by the name of David Hall. He had been highly recommended to Franklin by his friend Wm. Strahan, a Londoner, and Franklin had promised to befriend him to the best of his ability. Accordingly as soon as he landed Hall was taken in charge by Franklin and given employment in his shop. That he was not disappointed is clearly shown in a letter written by Franklin to Strahan February 12th, 1744. In this Franklin says: "I have no doubt but Mr. Hall will succeed well in what he undertakes. He is obliging, discreet, industrious, and honest, and when those Qualities meet, things seldom go amiss. Nothing in my power will be wanting to serve him."

So well indeed did Hall succeed that in four years time he was admitted to partnership with Franklin, on a basis that proved highly satisfactory to both. This was in January of 1748. Franklin was then forty-two years old, and had been in business for himself only twenty years.

By the terms of the agreement Hall was to pay to Franklin each year for a period of eighteen years regularly a sum of 1000£ (approximately \$2660. annually). Franklin now relinquished all his active interest in the concern and turned his attention henceforth chiefly to science, statesmanship, and letters. Of Hall he records that: "He took off my hands all care of the printing office, paying me punctually my share of the profits. This partnership continued eighteen years, successfully for us both."

It is a striking fact that the printing industry continued to lie very close to Franklin's heart throughout a very long life, though he relinquished all personal activity in this line at the early age of forty-two.

Isaiah Thomas in his "History of Printing," bears this testimony: "The following will show that Franklin retained a regard for the trade until the close of his life. In 1788, about two years before his death, a number of printers and booksellers met together in Philadelphia, to form some regulations for the benefit of the trade.* Bache, grandson of Franklin and myself were of the number. After the first meeting, I conversed with Dr. Franklin on the subject of our convention. He approved the measures proposed, and requested that the next meeting might be at his house, as he was unable himself to go abroad. The meeting was accordingly holden there; and although he was much afflicted with pain, he voluntarily took minutes of the proceedings and appeared to be interested in them."

The following epitaph written by Franklin long before his death has frequently been quoted as characteristic of the man. It shows in a beautiful light his love and reverence for the art which he had made his own:—

THE BODY OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER,
(LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK;
ITS CONTENTS WORN OUT,
AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING)
LIES HERE, FOOD FOR WORMS.
YET THE WORK ITSELF SHALL NOT BE LOST,
FOR IT WILL, AS HE BELIEVED, APPEAR ONCE MORE
IN A NEW
AND MORE BEAUTIFUL EDITION
CORRECTED AND AMENDED
BY ITS AUTHOR.

*Thomas adds, "several attempts have been made to establish rules and regulations for the benefit of the trade, but they have generally not proved successful."

When writing his will he begins with these impressive words: "I, Benjamin Franklin, Printer, late Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to the Court of France, and now President of the State of Pennsylvania."

Years before he had relinquished all active associations in the printing business, but yet when in the twilight of his life he comes to write his will he still remains above all else "Benjamin Franklin, *Printer*."

CHAPTER VII

Following the Founder

FRANKLIN undoubtedly shone as a bright light in virtually every field of endeavor upon which he entered. Yet in none was his success more marked than in the field of printing. His achievements in the craft have been a stimulus to many. Few have reached the goal which he attained, but all who have followed his example, his precepts and his practices have been the better for it. Were every printer to read and study the life of his patron and faithfully to put in practice Franklin's methods of foresight, industry, integrity, geniality and interest in men and things of their time, the craft would attain a level now only dreamed of.

Of Franklin's partner and immediate successor, David Hall, Isaiah Thomas the historian says: "Had he not been connected with Franklin he might have been a formidable rival to him in the business of printing and bookselling. Hall was well acquainted with the art of printing and was an industrious workman, of first rate abilities; a prudent and impartial conductor of the *Gazette*, and a benevolent and worthy man." The surmise indulged in by Thomas that Hall might have been a formidable rival is wide of the mark, since it was through the friendly offices of Franklin that Hall came to America and was so promptly settled here in an advantageous position.

David Hall was born in Scotland in the year 1714, and was reared as a printer in Edinburgh. From Edinburgh he went to London, where he obtained a position in the same printing house in which was also employed at that time as a journeyman, Wm. Strahan, a long time friend of Franklin, and in later years a famous law printer to the King. The fact that Hall attracted the attention and secured the friendship of so able a man as Strahan in itself foretold for him a brilliant future. Hall was thirty years of age when he entered Franklin's employ in 1744. He was a mature

man of thirty-four when in 1748 he took over the entire charge of the business.

Isaiah Thomas says of this period: "At that time the *Gazette* had an extensive circulation in Pennsylvania and in the neighboring Colonies, and the business of the printing house was very lucrative."

Scarcely three months elapsed after the termination of the partnership of Benjamin Franklin and David Hall when the latter formed a partnership with William Sellers. This was effected in May of 1766, and the firm became known as Hall and Sellers.

William Sellers had served his apprenticeship in London and had come to America some years before. Isaiah Thomas says of him, "He began business about 1764 and kept a book and stationery store in Arch Street between Second and Third,—Sellers was a correct and experienced printer, a good citizen, well known and as well respected."

The partnership of David Hall and William Sellers continued until the death of Hall on the twenty-fourth of December 1772, having lasted but six years. These two men were admittedly masters of their craft. Their business flourished and the *Gazette* maintained its supremacy.

David Hall was succeeded by his two sons William Hall and David Hall, Jr., the firm name remaining as Hall and Sellers. William Sellers maintained his interest actively until his death in February of 1804 at the age of seventy-nine years.

Scharf & Westcott in their History of Philadelphia note the fact that "The Pennsylvania Gazette continued its issues regularly under these proprietors until a short time before the occupation of Philadelphia by the British. The last number of this paper published before the capture of the City was dated September 10th, 1777 and was numbered 2533. During the occupancy and for some months afterward the publication of the paper was suspended. No. 2534 was published at Philadelphia on January 5th, 1779,

and from that time the publication went forward regularly."

The business was still conducted at 51 High Street (now 135 Market Street) in the same place where years before Franklin and Meredith had joined forces.

With the growth of the city had come keener competition until toward the end of the eighteenth century, during the period of the partnership of William Sellers with the two younger Halls, there were, according to Scharf and Westcott, "in the city and suburbs of Philadelphia thirty-one printing presses, printing four daily and two semi-weekly papers, one of them in the French language, and two weekly journals one of them in the German language." But the firm of Hall and Sellers was built on a solid foundation and they easily held their own, much of the best printing of the time emanating from their press.

After the death of William Sellers in 1804 the business was managed in the names of William and David Hall, but was later transferred to William Hall, Jr. About the year 1810 William Hall, Jr. formed a partnership with Geo. W. Pierie and the firm became Hall and Pierie. The printing industry in Philadelphia had grown to such an extent that there were now in the city fifty-one printing offices and a total of 153 presses. There were also at this time about sixty engravers engaged there, thus showing that the art of illustrating was fast taking a recognized place in works of printing.

About the year 1815 or 1816 the firm of Hall and Pierie was dissolved, Geo. W. Pierie dropping out and giving place to Samuel C. Atkinson. The business was thus conducted as Hall and Atkinson until the death of Hall on the twenty-seventh of May, 1821.

In the same year that Hall died, 1821, Samuel C. Atkinson took into partnership Charles Alexander, and the business was conducted as Atkinson & Alexander.

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CHAPTER VIII

A New Era in Journalism

THE year 1821 marked another era in American journalism, for "Atkinson and Alexander at once determined upon a revolution in the character of the paper and the partners proceeded to build up a new business on the venerable foundation of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. They at once issued proposals for the publication of a new weekly paper, to which they gave the name of the *Saturday Evening Post*. The first number was issued August 4, 1821. It was published at the price of \$2.00 a year, payable half yearly in advance, or \$3.00 a year if not paid until the end of the year. The proprietors were young men and were ambitious. They endeavored to make their paper of interest to all classes, encouraged rising genius, which hurried to see itself in print in the 'Poets Corner,' or in the story columns, gave some attention to news, foreign, as well as domestic, and eschewed all politics. It was a paper for the family and although some particular attention was paid to local matters, there was sufficient variety of general intelligence to interest persons not resident in Philadelphia. Thus by judicious attention to business the paper became popular, and gained a large circulation, so that there was in time no part of the United States into which the *Post* did not penetrate." In its first days the editor of the *Post* was Thomas Cottrell Clarke.

In 1827 the firm of Atkinson and Alexander moved their plant from Market St. (or High St.) to 112 Chestnut Street between Third and Fourth. Thus for ninety-nine years the business founded by Benjamin Franklin had remained in one locality. It had grown up with the city, had seen the population creep from approximately 12,000 in 1728 to 80,458 in 1827, (census of 1830) had kept in line with the growing industries of the Country, had met the new requirements put upon it from year to year, and finally with the shifting of centers

of trade it was moved to a locality better suited to its purposes in that advanced age.

Speaking of the plant in 1821, about the time of the establishment of the Saturday Evening Post, Scharf & Westcott say: "This paper even so late as 1821 was worked off with the laborious manipulation of wrist dislocating ink-balls, and a clumsy beating of forms that can hardly be realized by the skillful pressman of the present day, while the crude press of Patrick Lyon, and even the improved Columbian and Washington, taxed the Pressman's strength from Friday noon—sometimes all night and far into the next day—to work off what would now be a very moderate edition. While the advent of the new paper required a supply of new type, the old stock was not melted up, but what was then looked upon as the Old Franklin type was carefully preserved. One use and perhaps the latest to which it was put, was in the hands of a reverend compositor, who set up his own translation of the New Testament, the proofs being taken on the old Franklin Press. This was the reverend Dr. Abner Knelland, a Universalist Theologian, an able and popular preacher in that day."

In 1828 Samuel C. Atkinson became sole proprietor. The business was now located at 112 Chestnut Street. In 1833 it was moved to 36 Carter's Alley, where it remained until 1840 when it was again moved to the second floor of the Old Ledger Building at the southwest corner of Third and Chestnut Sts. Just prior to this last removal, Samuel C. Atkinson had sold the business in November of 1839 to John S. DuSolle and George R. Graham. DuSolle remained, however, only a few months, and was succeeded by Charles J. Peterson, the firm name being George R. Graham & Co. In 1843 George R. Graham and Charles J. Peterson sold the business to Samuel D. Patterson & Co. Five years later, in March of 1848 Samuel D. Patterson & Co., disposed of the establishment to Edmund Deacon and Henry Peterson,

each of whom had previously held an interest in the business.

Under the firm name of Deacon & Peterson the business flourished. The Saturday Evening Post became an extremely profitable enterprise, and the job and book printing departments were by no means neglected.

The plant was moved in 1848 to No. 66 South Third St. (old style numbering) into the building adjoining the Girard Bank on the South side. The office and plant of Deacon & Peterson were located on the second floor directly over the North American office.

John Callahan, now in his seventy-seventh year is probably the veteran of employing printers in Philadelphia. Today, Manager of the Franklin Printing Company, his business career covers a continuous service with the same house extending over a period of sixty-three years. In 1852, then a boy of fourteen, he entered the employ of Deacon and Peterson. Outside the door he had seen a sign "Boy wanted," and though having had previously only a year's experience with another printing concern he felt qualified to meet the requirements of Deacon & Peterson. He was promptly given employment, and immediately went to work in the ware-room, at the very bottom of the ladder. In those days the equipment consisted of three Adams presses, and three job presses. The plant managed as Mr. Callahan says, "to turn out an immense amount of work." The business end of the organization mainly devolved upon Edmund Deacon. Henry Peterson edited the Saturday Evening Post.

It has been noted above that at the outset the "Saturday Evening Post" eschewed all politics. This proved, as a circulation getter, a most successful policy, especially for those turbulent ante-bellum days. Fully one hundred thousand copies of the Post were distributed every week throughout the Union, many of them going into the Southern States. But there was trouble in store for the "Post." Henry Peterson was

an ardent abolitionist. With such a mighty engine of publicity, the Post, in his hands, the temptation proved too strong to resist. He broke away from the settled policy of the past, and wrote and published a violent anti-slavery article. The result was effective and instantaneous. Hardly had the papers reached their destination before indignant subscribers hastened to hurl them back at the publishers. As Mr. Callahan expresses it they came into the office, often unopened "by baskets full and barrels full." The subscribers, particularly those in the South, would have none of Peterson's Politics and that anti-slavery editorial sounded the doom of the Post for many years. The heyday of its prosperity was a thing of the past.

Nevertheless its publication was continued and with what was left of the Post, combined with the job printing department, Deacon & Peterson were fairly successful. The Post later went into other hands. *In the early '70's Henry Peterson dropped out of the firm leaving Edmund Deacon sole owner of the business. Mr. Deacon died February 4th, 1877, and was succeeded by his stepson E. Stanley Hart. The firm name became the Franklin Printing House, E. Stanley Hart & Co., Proprietors, and was known by that title until the incorporation, January 31st, 1889, of the present company. The Franklin Printing Company was incorporated under the laws of the State of Pennsylvania to take over the printing and binding business which has been conducted under the name of the Franklin Printing House.

E. Stanley Hart was elected president of the corporation, and continued to fill that office until 1893, so that the business had remained in the same family for forty-five years. On August 17th, 1891, E. Lawrence Fell and Senator William C. Sproul bought a controlling interest in the Franklin Printing Company, the former being elected Treasurer and the latter Secretary. In 1893

*In 1898 The Saturday Evening Post was bought by the Curtis Publishing Co. It has since become the greatest publication of its kind in the world.

Mr. Fell succeeded Mr. Hart as President of the company, and has continued in that office until the present time. Robert N. Fell was elected Treasurer February 16th, 1903, and William W. Fell was elected Secretary November 21st, 1910. John Callahan has continued since the incorporation of the company as General Manager.

The Franklin Printing Company occupies today an assured position among the printers of Philadelphia. Though surrounded by many other printing establishments, where Franklin at the beginning had only two competitors, they nevertheless rejoice in the progress of the industry and the improvement of the trade.

The present plant is thoroughly modern, as was Franklin's in his day. Machinery of the highest type, ample for all requirements with workmen skilled to render the true Franklin service, are at the command of all with whom the company do business.

Though a seven days' wonder in its time, Franklin's shop could not produce in a whole year the output of the Franklin Printing Company for a single day in the year 1915.

Hall's Letter to Franklin in Reference to their Partnership Accounts in the Printing Business

302 HALL, DAVID. Partner of Benjamin Franklin in the printing business. Autograph letter, signed. Folio. Philadelphia, February 3, 1772. With Address.

This interesting letter was written to Franklin during his residence in London and gives a full account of the profits of the business as well as the meagre earnings of the Pennsylvania Gazette. The letter reads as follows:

“Philada., February 3, 1772

“Dear Sir:

“Your last kind Letter to me, was dated June 11th, 1770, in answer to mine of the 17th of March preceeding. What money I have since received on our Company Account, is as follows, viz,

“For the Gazette from Feby 17, 1770 to January 28, 1772 . . .	£358,13
“By Cash received for Work done, as credited in the Ledger, in the above mentioned Time . . .	} 181,17,10½
	<hr/> £540,10,10½ <hr/>

“and I have paid on your Account to Mrs. Franklin the following Monies, as by her Receipts and Orders will appear.

1771

“Jany 25 For purchasing a Bill of Exchange for £30-Sterl. . . £50——

“Aug 1st 16 By Cash paid Ballance of an Account from the Estate of the late Mr William Branson against you by Order . . 7,19,7½

“By my Part of Eleven Years and Three Quarters Gazette, discounted in Mr Branson’s Account against you . . . 2,18,9

“Oct 18, By Cash pd Mrs Franklin . . . 24——

29, Ditto paid Robert Erwin by Mrs Franklin’s Order . . . 7,12 ——

“Nov. 29 By Ditto paid Mrs Franklin for the purchasing a Lot of Ground for you of Mrs Parker . 100——

“By Sundries had in the shop . 6,13,2

£199,3,6½

“I should be glad of the Pleasure of a Letter from you soon, and to know whether you can now fix the Time of your setting out for Philadelphia. I should be glad it was quickly, as Mrs Parker is now no more and I want much to have our Partnership settled, as far as it can be done, and to endeavour to fall upon some Method, in order to get in the outstanding Debts, which must amount to a great Deal, if it was possible to get them anything like collected. It is an affair, I think worthy of your looking after, and taking some Pains to accomplish.

“My Family, at present, all in very good health—My Wife as well as can be expected, I did not think she would get over the Loss of our only and much loved Daughter, but it has pleased God Wonderfully to support her under that heavy affliction; and I really think she is better in her health now than she had been for some years past—Mrs Franklin, Mrs Bache, and Child are all well, I suppose you will hear from them by this Packet. My Compliments to Mr Bache. I am glad to know by those who have seen you lately, that you enjoy a good state of Health, the Continuance of which shall be always my most sincere Wish. You may believe me to be,

“Dear Sir,

“Yours most affectionately,

“DAVID HALL.”

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